

10/529,996

[008] DE 44 33 824 C2 has disclosed, by way of example, one actuating device for a friction clutch of a motor vehicle which has one drive mechanism and one crankshaft gear that converts the movement of the drive shaft thereof to an essentially translatory movement of an output element. The crankshaft gear is designed as a worm gear with one worm sitting upon the drive shaft and meshing with one tooth segment of one segment gear wheel rotatably supported in one housing. ~~[[On]]~~ ~~t~~he segment worm gear wheel laterally engages one preload element with one spring device. The spring device springs back under expansion out of a predeterminable dead center position, whereby the releasing direction is in such a manner being selected so that the tension has at least one essential component in deflection direction of the contact spring of the friction clutch which can be deflected from its operative position by the output element, designed as a hydraulic master cylinder, via a slave cylinder (not shown). Thereby the spring device of the preload element assists, as accumulator, the drive mechanism during the movement thereof so that the drive mechanism can be designed as relatively low-powered.

[021] The actuating device, shown in Fig. 2, has one electric motor 34, which with a gear wheel 36 upon its output shaft 38, drives a spindle nut 42 via an intermediate wheel ~~[[30]]~~ 40. The electric motor 34 is connected via a connecting plug 62 with the module 22 from where it draws its energy supply and its control commands. The electric motor 34 or the actuating device 18 is provided with a housing flange 64 which is connected with the gearing 8 or any other body part of the vehicle 2.

6/25/07 11:26 AM

- 2 -

10/529,996

1-10. (CANCELED)

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An actuating device (18) for a clutch (6) of a motor vehicle (2) between one prime mover (4) and a first gearing (8) which comprises one electric motor (34), a converter gearing (36, 40, 42, 44) and one accumulator (52) for power assistance in actuating the clutch (6) support, the converter gearing comprises one recirculating ball spindle (44) and [[an]] the accumulator (52) for power support is situated at least partly within the recirculating ball spindle (44) providing power assistance directly to the recirculating ball spindle (44).

12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The actuating device (18) according to claim 11, wherein the recirculating ball spindle (44) is hollow.

13. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The actuating device (18) according to claim 11, wherein the accumulator comprises at least one coil spring (52).

14. (CANCELED)

15. (CANCELED)

16. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The actuating device (18) according to claim 11, wherein an external diameter of the accumulator (52) is essentially equal to an internal diameter of the recirculating ball spindle (44).

17. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The actuating device (18) according to claim 11, wherein in a fluid-actuated clutch (6) between the prime mover (4) and the first gearing (8), which comprises one master cylinder for the fluid on the actuating device (18), one slave cylinder for the fluid on the clutch (6) and one fluid pipe therebetween, the recirculating ball spindle (44) forms master cylinder.

5/25/07 11:23 AM

- 3 -

10/529,996

18. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The actuating device (18) according to claim 11, wherein within the recirculating ball spindle (44) are situated one or more parts (58, 60) of one displacement sensor (56).

19. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of actuating a clutch of a motor vehicle by utilization of a hollow recirculating ball spindle (44) for accommodating parts (52, 58, 60) of an actuating device (18) to be operated with the recirculating ball spindle (44) of a clutch (6) between one prime mover (4) and one gearing (8) of a motor vehicle (2) which is situated within the hollow recirculating ball spindle (44).

20. (NEW) An actuating device (18) for a clutch (6) of a motor vehicle (2) the actuating device (18) situated in a housing located between a prime mover (4) and a vehicle transmission (8) the actuating device comprising:

an electric motor (34) driving a gearing (36, 40, 42, 44) rotating a hollow recirculating ball spindle (44) for converting rotational motion of the motor (34) into linear motion of the recirculating ball spindle (44) for actuation of the clutch;

the recirculating ball spindle (44) being connected to the clutch and an accumulator (52) biasing the recirculating ball spindle (44) to provide additional power assistance besides the electric motor to actuate the clutch (6); and

wherein the accumulator is positioned at least partially inside the hollow recirculating ball spindle (44) between the housing and a first end of the recirculating ball spindle (44).

21. (NEW) The actuating device (18) according to claim 20, wherein the accumulator comprises at least one coil spring (52).

10/529,996

22. (NEW) The actuating device (18) according to claim 20, wherein an external diameter of the accumulator (52) is essentially equal to an internal diameter of the recirculating ball spindle (44).

23. (NEW) The actuating device (18) according to claim 20, wherein in a fluid-actuated clutch (6) between the prime mover (4) and the first gearing (8), which comprises one master cylinder for the fluid on the actuating device (18), one slave cylinder for the fluid on the clutch (6) and one fluid pipe therebetween, the recirculating ball spindle (44) forms master cylinder.

24. (NEW) The actuating device (18) according to claim 20, wherein within the recirculating ball spindle (44) are situated one or more parts (58, 60) of one displacement sensor (56).

5/25/07 11:26 AM